

## “Toy Guns...Really?”

I was recently asked to write a piece on why moms and dads should consider not buying their children toy guns for Christmas - or at any other time.

When I began thinking about this subject, the first thing that jumped out at me is the clearly misleading notion that guns can or should ever, be viewed as toys. No. This is an oxymoronic notion, to say the least. Guns are tools used for very specific, very serious ends, and should never be represented as toys. Recalling my own childhood mentality regarding toy guns, I can honestly say it is absolutely ridiculous to think that providing a child with such a toy will serve any meaningful purpose. He or she will only begin to imitate the gun violence that is seen in almost every television show and action movie, or heard about on the news, and that sadly, occurs in our communities every day.

I want to say outright that I fully appreciate and respect the second amendment to the United States Constitution that guarantees the right to bear arms to responsible adults. This right is as sacred as any other right that is intended to preserve our general liberty. However, simply because we are free to bear arms **doesn't** mean that we should do so, or that there is a good reason for doing so. And where our children are concerned, what message are we sending to them by giving them toy guns? As stated above, even in the hands of responsible adults, guns are always viewed as extremely dangerous weapons, and not toys. So, isn't it a bit precarious to afford a child the opportunity to somehow figure this out on their own? Isn't it reckless to allow a child in their nascent stages of psychological development to become desensitized to such realities through their seemingly playful activities?

I will not belabor the point with examples of all the tragic gun violence that we see and experience every day, but I would like to ask you, as parents, to imagine what your child might say if asked how he or she might use a toy gun...and then take this even further and imagine how you would feel if, God forbid, one of the many tragedies associated with guns is visited upon your family.

Guns are not toys. So I'll ask one thing of you for Christmas this year: please consider sparing your child the opportunity to fantasize about shooting, maiming, or killing anyone or anything.

Sincerely, Marc James Asay  
Florida Death Row  
December, 2014

This is reprinted in memory of a soul-friend who was executed by lethal injection in Florida's death chambers on August 28, 2017, for killing two people. When he was 17. Please share this, remembering Marc.